

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 672

By Wilder

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Senator Ben Atchley for his meritorious service as a member of the General Assembly as he prepares for his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should honor those fellow members who in their years of elected office have performed their duties with remarkable dexterity, unprecedented devotion and an unfailing constancy of attention to the needs of the citizens of their respective districts and to the State as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Senator Ben Atchley of Knoxville is one such estimable and distinguished public servant who has served with distinction for 32 years as a member of the Tennessee General Assembly; his announced and much deserved retirement will be effective upon the *sine die* adjournment of the 103rd General Assembly and the November 2, 2004, general election; and

WHEREAS, Curtis Bentley Atchley, Jr. was born June 30, 1930, in Knoxville, briefly dropped out of high school as a Freshman, but returned to school a year later at the urging of a science teacher and carried an expanded course load that allowed him to graduate on schedule in 1948; he attended the University of Tennessee, and served in the United States Naval Reserve from 1948-58; and

WHEREAS, as a child, Ben worked weekends at a gas station, helped at the school cafeteria, and operated the Yellow Jacket Diner out of a revamped yellow school bus body attached to his father's grocery store; later in his life, he worked ten years for Southern Bell telephone Company, including assignments from climbing poles and stringing wire to declining a management position in order to stay in Knoxville; and

WHEREAS, Ben Atchley next embarked upon a career in the insurance business, ultimately becoming a Chartered Life Underwriter and Insurance Executive in the firm of Atchley, Cunningham and Shoemaker; he has served as president of the Knoxville Chapter of

the National Association of Life Underwriters from 1971-72, the 1970 designee as chartered life underwriter for the American College of Life Underwriters, and former president of the Knoxville General Agents and Managers Association from 1966-67; and

WHEREAS, Ben Atchley began his elected political career in 1972, succeeding to the House seat formerly held by Representative Richard Krieg, who elected not to run again; after serving two distinguished terms in the House during the 88th and 89th General Assemblies, he was elected to the 6th Senate District seat formerly held by Senator Fred Berry in 1976; and

WHEREAS, Senator Atchley has served astutely on a variety of standing committees, including Commerce and Education in the House; in the Senate, he has been a member of the Energy and Natural Resources, Highway Planning, Development and Safety, Judiciary, Government Operations, State and Local Government, and most recently, Education, Finance, Ways and Means, Ethics, Calendar, Rules, Senate Management Committee and Joint Legislative Services Committees; and

WHEREAS, Senator Atchley is a member of the Board of Directors of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation, serving as its chairman in 1995-98 and becoming chairman emeritus in 1999 and as a member of the Advisory Council of the Government Ethics Center, a division of the Josephson Institute for the Advancement of Ethics; his leadership abilities were recognized by his colleagues resulting in his selection as Senate Republican Caucus Chairman of the 93rd and 94th General Assemblies and Senate Republican Leader since the 95th General Assembly, an exemplary tenure that attests to his outstanding abilities; and

WHEREAS, highly active in a multitude of Knoxville-Knox County civic and service organizations, Senator Atchley is a member and past president of the Optimist Club of South Knoxville; the 1967 recipient of the Optimist International's Distinguished President Award; Optimist Scholarship Fund Trustee; and a member of the South Knoxville Lodge #769 F & A Masons, Scottish Rite and Shriner; Sons of the American Revolution; Leadership Knoxville, Class of 1985; Leadership Knoxville Board of Directors; Greater Knoxville Sport Corporation Board of Directors; and the Advisory Board of First Tennessee Bank; and

WHEREAS, Ben Atchley evinces his faith as a longtime and active member of Graystone Presbyterian Church where he has taught Sunday school, been a soloist in the

Chancel Choir, served as an Elder and now as Elder Emeritus; he is the recipient of the Barnabas Award for achievement in public service from the Presbytery of East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Senator Atchley has served during the administration of six governors and with many former members of the State House of Representatives and Senate, most, if not all of whom hold him in the highest esteem; and

WHEREAS, Ben Atchley has been described by former Governor Ned McWherter as "...straightforward, He is honest, and he always brought integrity to the job... He was not a mean partisan person. When he told you something, you could depend upon it." Former Knoxville Mayor and State Senator Victor Ashe said Senator Atchley has served longer in the Senate than any Knoxville since Tennessee became a state in 1796. "He has been a model of civility, integrity and intelligence. It will be very difficult to find a replacement of his caliber who will have the same influence that he did"; and

WHEREAS, exemplifying the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean, Senator Atchley has been fortunate to enjoy the love, companionship and support of his wife of 52 years, the former Sue King; they are the proud parents of son Jerry and his wife, Cathy, and daughter Cindy, and the doting grandparents of Lori and Jennifer Atchley; and

WHEREAS, though his highly visible presence in top Republican posts in the Senate has made him a partisan point man on many issues, members on both sides of the aisle regard him as a thoughtful and gentle resolver of conflicts rather than being quick to create them; he is a strong proponent of the Senate's bipartisan, inclusive leadership and remained so during the Republican party's brief majority in the Senate; and

WHEREAS, from his legislative office on the third floor of the War Memorial Building, ably assisted by loyal staff members Ms. Tootie Haskins and Ms. Joyce Johnson, Senator Atchley has adroitly led his party and effectively served his 6th Senatorial district constituents and the citizens of Tennessee with fairness, integrity and energy for the past eighteen years; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Senator Atchley has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of both his colleagues in the General Assembly and the people of Tennessee; his departure from

the General Assembly will leave a void that will not be easily filled, and his considerable talents and energies will be sorely missed; and

WHEREAS, this body finds it appropriate to reluctantly bid farewell to our esteemed and respected friend and colleague, Senator Ben Atchley; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor Senator Ben Atchley for his meritorious service to Tennessee as a member of the General Assembly, commend him for his countless contributions and many good works in service to the citizens of the 6th district, Knox County and Tennessee, and extend to him and to his lovely wife, Sue, our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.